

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

As former president of the Capital Radio-Television News Directors Association in Sacramento, I believe that news on the public airwaves is supposed to be fair and balanced. But our local Sinclair affiliate, KOVR 13 in Sacramento, runs pro-Republican commentary often if not nightly on its ten o'clock news with no attempt to offer competing views.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.